

WINTER
2026

RED TAPE



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this issue contains the names and images of people who have passed.



This issue of *Red Tape* contains information some readers may find confronting. If you feel you need help, organisations that can provide assistance include:

- Respect National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling 1800 737 732
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
- MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78

All members of CPSU NSW are also members of the Public Service Association (PSA). The PSA is the associated body that manages and resources CPSU NSW.

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The Public Service Association of New South Wales and Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and the places in which we live. We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples to Australia.





THE UNION THAT FIGHTS FOR ALL OF US

Our union fights for everyone in NSW.

In 2026, the PSA CPSU NSW took action addressing both the housing crisis and domestic violence, framing them as interconnected issues requiring stronger intervention by government.

The PSA's housing report, launched at our Annual Conference, is in response to a housing crisis that has gripped our country, including the public sector workers we represent. Not only does this affect our members, it harms the people who depend on their services.

Our report highlights that housing unaffordability is no longer limited to low-income groups, but is affecting essential workers across the state, undermining workforce stability and service delivery.

The crisis means long commutes, reduced access to essential services, and the risk of homelessness even among employed workers. There is a link between housing insecurity and domestic violence, noting that some members were unable to leave abusive relationships due to unaffordable housing.

This brings us to an important campaign. The PSA recently launched its Domestic Violence Needs Public Services campaign calling for services to be delivered as a core public sector responsibility.

At present, NSW approaches domestic violence in a fragmented, inconsistent manner. We want this to stop. We need a government-run domestic violence service to improve accountability, coordination, and long-term support for victim-survivors.

This is not just about our members, it is about protecting the people in our

WE TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR ROLE AS A UNION IN THE NATION'S BIGGEST SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

state from a crisis that sees our Police Force receive a domestic violence-related call every three minutes.

These two campaigns show that we take seriously our role as a union that is part of the nation's largest social justice movement.

Together, these campaigns position housing and domestic violence as systemic issues requiring integrated, publicly delivered solutions. They not only reinforce the PSA's broader advocacy for rebuilding public sector capacity, they will save lives.

CELEBRATING OUR DELEGATE OF THE YEAR



Congratulations to James Shonk from NSW Police on being named Delegate of the Year at the 2026 Annual Conference.

James has built up membership in his area and has been a tireless advocate for his colleagues who do so much to keep the people of NSW safe.

It was also a pleasure to congratulate Lynette Willet on being a card-carrying member of the PSA for a remarkable 50 years. Also pictured are delegate recognition award winners James Ricupito from the Art Gallery of NSW and Sharne Fielder from the Australian Museum.



UNION DEMANDS WIN \$1000 PAYMENT

Inflation figures trigger a one-off payment for members.

Public Servants and most TAFE support staff will receive a \$1000 boost to their pay packets thanks to action from their union. “When we negotiated a three-year pay deal for members, we demanded a one-off payment if inflation went too high,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “In 2024, PSA members

voted to accept an 11.4 per cent cumulative pay offer over three years. But the deal included a provision if inflation grew too high.

“The deal included an inflation safeguard for members at our insistence – in the form of a one-off, taxable, non-cumulative cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) payment of \$1000 (plus superannuation) should the Sydney Consumer Price Index (CPI) exceed 4 per cent in the second or third year of the deal.”

In April, it was announced the CPI

exceeded 4 per cent in the March 2026 quarter. Thanks to the union deal, all members covered by the 2024 increase will receive the \$1000 COLA payment negotiated by the PSA as part of that deal. Part-time employees get a pro rata payment.

After the inflation figures were released, the PSA CPSU NSW met immediately with the State Government to get the payment implemented.

“This shows the power of a strong union fighting on behalf of its members,” said Mr Little.



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LET'S CELEBRATE THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE A STAND

Brave PSA CPSU NSW members speak out on issues that matter.

PSA CPSU NSW members are often the ones behind the scenes. They are the people who ensure our state runs and remains one of the premier places on the planet to live, work and learn.

Sometimes, though, our members and the people who work with them are the ones who step out from behind the scenes and speak out, taking action to make our state even better.

The case of PSA CPSU NSW member Lisa Simmons, for example, shows what can happen when a voice is raised. Her concerns at the University of Wollongong have resulted in an investigation into the way the university awards contracts.

Whistleblowers are important because they ensure accountability. In many organisations, employees are the first to witness unethical practices. By speaking up, whistleblowers help prevent harm to individuals, communities, and the environment.

Our society is the better for their actions. Their actions often lead to investigations, reforms, and stronger regulations that improve transparency and ethical standards.

Whistleblowers also play a crucial role in strengthening democratic systems by ensuring that governments and institutions are held responsible for their actions. Without them, misconduct could continue unchecked, eroding trust and causing long-term damage. Although they often face personal and professional risks, including retaliation or isolation, their courage contributes to a culture where integrity is valued. Ultimately, whistleblowers serve the public interest by bringing truth to light

and encouraging organisations to act responsibly and ethically.

Sometimes it is the people we work with who make the brave decision to speak out. At the launch of our union's Domestic Violence Needs Public Services campaign, two women who have survived violence in the home, Bindii and Danielle, spoke of their experiences and how a

state-run service saved their lives and could save the lives of women like them.

These women stood in front of news cameras and spoke at a forum attended by PSA CPSU NSW members so that our state could better serve its most vulnerable people.

They embody the values our union stands for.





PSA LAUNCHES REPORT ON HOUSING

Public workers 'one rent rise away' from crisis, union warns in new housing response.

Thousands of NSW public sector workers are facing severe housing stress, with many just one rent or interest rate rise away from losing their homes, according to a major report published by the PSA CPSU NSW.

The union is using new survey data to argue that the housing crisis has become a direct threat to the delivery of essential services, warning that workers across government agencies and bodies such as universities and TAFE colleges are increasingly unable to afford to live near their jobs.

The union's 2026 housing affordability report, based on responses from more than 5000 members, found nearly two-thirds of respondents are in housing stress, paying more than 30 per cent of their income on accommodation.

"This includes frontline staff such as child protection workers, prison officers and school support staff, many of whom are in stable, full-time employment but still struggling to secure housing," said

General Secretary Stewart Little.

The report found some workers reported being homeless despite having jobs, while others said they were forced to choose between paying for housing, food or medical care. Long commutes and overcrowded living arrangements are also becoming increasingly common.

"The findings demonstrate that housing affordability is no longer just a social issue but a workforce crisis with broad implications for communities," said Mr Little. "If public servants cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of their workplace, it directly impacts the services they provide."

The union is also highlighting how the crisis disproportionately affects vulnerable groups within its membership. Women more than 45 years old are particularly at risk of long-term housing insecurity, with many facing the prospect of renting into retirement.

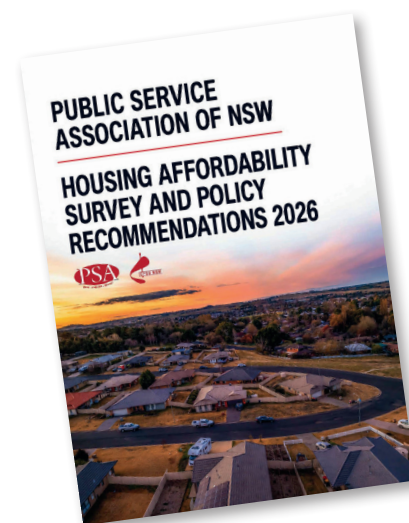
As part of its campaign, the PSA CPSU NSW is calling for a major expansion of public housing, arguing that reliance on the private rental market has failed to meet the needs of essential workers.

It is also pushing for broader reforms, including changes to housing tax settings, better use of public land for development, and investment in alternative housing models such as build-to-rent schemes.

The union has framed its campaign around a simple message: essential workers should be able to afford to live in the communities they serve.

It warns that without significant policy changes, the housing crisis will continue to undermine recruitment and retention across the public sector, placing additional strain on already stretched services.

"This is no longer just about individual hardship," the report says. "It is about the sustainability of the public services that communities rely on every day."





THERE FOR THOSE WHO NEED US

As the Federal Government retreats from disability services, NSW should step up.

NSW became the only state in the country without a safety net for people with disability when the previous Liberal-National Government outsourced care entirely. Using the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as a cover, the NSW Government moved all state disability services to non-government organisations (NGOs). Many of these still employ our members, who do extraordinary work with some of

the most vulnerable people in our society.

However, the NDIS has seen its budget blow out to levels so high the Federal Government is sharpening its razor.

An expected 160,000 people will be removed from the NDIS to save \$185bn over the coming decade. In addition, it will be harder in the future to be eligible for an NDIS package.

This means the NSW Government has a growing responsibility to establish a government-run safety net for people with disability in this state. While the NDIS remains a cornerstone of disability policy, recent changes have exposed its limitations and highlighted the urgent need for complementary, state-based support systems.

The NDIS was never designed to serve all people with disability. In fact, most Australians with disability do not qualify for it, and there is already a documented lack of services outside the scheme. Without a strong alternative, those excluded risk being left without essential supports such as therapy, assistive technology, or community participation programs. This gap is precisely where a NSW Government-run safety net becomes essential.

A 2026 NSW parliamentary inquiry found that families face long wait times, unclear pathways, and significant barriers when trying to access disability supports outside the NDIS. These systemic flaws are particularly pronounced in regional areas and among disadvantaged communities, worsening inequality.

A coordinated, State Government-led safety net could provide clearer access points, consistent standards, and equitable service delivery across the state.

The alternatives are bleak. A lack of access to help affects people's safety, independence, and quality of life. Evidence presented during national debates indicates that reduced funding for supports such as community participation and therapy can lead to social isolation, declining health, and even increased risks of unsafe environments. Without the work our members do, these outcomes may place greater pressure on hospitals, housing, and crisis services, shifting costs rather than reducing them.

The Grattan Institute has found that a state-based safety net will ensure no one falls through the cracks as the NDIS is cut. These supports could include early intervention services, community-based programs, and navigation assistance. These are all services our members could do as Public Sector employees.

Without a safety net, thousands of people with disability risk losing access to essential supports, deepening inequality and undermining the broader goals of inclusion, independence, and wellbeing.

We are better than that.



UNION FAREWELLS A FIGHTER FOR ABORIGINAL MEMBERS

Goodbye to a giant figure in the history of the PSA CPSU NSW.

In April this year, the PSA CPSU NSW lost Ann Weldon, a proud Wiradjuri woman and a tireless advocate for Aboriginal members.

Ann was a colossal figure in Australia's Aboriginal rights movement.

Her time at the PSA CPSU NSW saw a renewed commitment to First Nations workers, paving the way for the union's groundbreaking Aboriginal Council.

Born Ann Pauline Coe in 1953 and raised on Erambie Mission near Cowra on Wiradjuri Country, Ann's early life was shaped by both the challenges and resilience of Aboriginal communities in mid-20th century Australia. Inspired by the growing Aboriginal rights movement following the 1967 Referendum, she moved to Sydney in the early 1970s, settling in the heart of the city's Aboriginal community, Redfern.

Known as Aunty Ann, she devoted more than five decades to advancing the rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Her work extended far beyond protest; she was instrumental in building enduring Aboriginal-controlled institutions such as the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service, a landmark organisation providing legal representation and advocacy for her people.

She also helped establish the Aboriginal Children's Service and supported the creation of the Aboriginal Medical Service, which was Australia's first Aboriginal community-controlled health service.

She held senior roles including Chair of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office Board and Chief Executive of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. Across these positions, she worked tirelessly to secure safe housing, community control and long-term reform in services affecting Aboriginal people.

Ann believed strongly Aboriginal people must lead the decisions that affect their lives.

In recognition of her extraordinary contributions, Ann was appointed a Member



of the Order of Australia in 2025.

Ann Weldon's life is deeply entwined with modern Aboriginal self-determination

"Aunty Ann Weldon will be dearly missed by not only her family and the Redfern Aboriginal community, but the wider community across the state and nation," said Chair of the PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council Carlo Svagelli. "Aunty Ann was a staunch woman who wasn't afraid to say what was needed to be said. And this was shown in many different sectors including Aboriginal Land Rights, Housing, Child Protection and Education and the importance of self determination especially for the local communities."

PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little said, "She was one of the

great characters. If you didn't know her position on an issue before you spoke to her, you certainly knew afterwards."

PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess described Ann as "a great fighter for women in our movement".

Her daughter, Yvonne Weldon, continues her legacy as a Councillor with the City of Sydney.

"Without realising it, I have done a lot of similar things that Mum has with my little journey," said Yvonne. "Mum always told us three girls 'there is always someone else worse off'. I saw this in the generosity of everything Mum gave, especially her time. Mum opened her home to so many foster children and family members.

"Mum always fought to make positive change for the First Nations and everyone."



IT'S TIME FOR MORE TIME OFF

Nationwide push gets support from PSA CPSU NSW.

The PSA CPSU NSW supports the push for additional annual leave for Australian workers.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions will pursue an increase in annual leave entitlements from four to five weeks per year and from five to six weeks for regular shift workers.

This would be the first increase in the minimum standard since the mid-1970s.

“Australia should increase annual leave to a minimum of five weeks for full-time workers,” said ACTU Secretary Sally McManus. “Australians work relatively long hours, which has only increased over time, yet the four-week annual leave standard was set 50 years ago.”

Ms McManus said more leave will make up for the unpaid work many employees do for their bosses.

“Extra leave will decrease stress and burnout,” she said. “Australian workers already do an extra four and a half weeks of unpaid work on average every year. Getting back one of these weeks is fair and reasonable. It will mean a better rested and happier workforce.”

“Younger workers aged from 18 to 24 years old most urgently need to see this burden start to lift. They are the ones doing the most unpaid work; an average of 6.4 weeks of free work for their employers each year.”

The ACTU maintains increasing annual leave by one week would add an extra 2 per cent to employment costs that would be offset by a reduction in employee turnover and time lost to injury and stress.

NSW workers received an extra day off in 2026, with 27 April being declared a public holiday as Anzac Day fell on a Saturday. However, Australia is falling behind other industrialised countries when it comes to paid leave.

In the United Kingdom, almost all workers in the UK are entitled to five

weeks and three days of paid holiday per year, which equals 28 days for a full-time, five-day-a-week employee. It is up to employers to decide whether this includes the eight public holidays referred locally as bank holidays.

French workers are legally entitled to a minimum of five weeks of paid leave per year. This right applies to all employees from their first day of hire, regardless of whether they work full-time or part-time.

Workers must take a “main leave” of at least two weeks between 1 May and 31 October. As a result, many French businesses close down in the summer months as workers go en masse on holiday.

Mountainous microstate Andorra is the world leader for paid leave, giving workers 31 days a year. Added to that are 14 public holidays, giving Andorrans 45 days off a year to enjoy life in the Pyrenees.

PSA members under the Industrial Relations Commission have four weeks a year, with an extra week given to those working in the far west of the state.

FIELD OFFICER WIN MAY HAVE SECTOR-WIDE IMPLICATIONS

IRC finds just calling someone a casual employee does not automatically make them a casual employee.

The PSA has successfully proved the majority of “casual” field officers at Corrective Services NSW are, in reality, ongoing employees. This strengthens their rights to secure employment and associated entitlements, and limits the government’s ability to use casual labels for permanent work.

The PSA ran a test case in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) on behalf of a Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Community Corrections Field Officer who had been classified as a casual employee.

“The Court found that, despite being labelled ‘casual’, the officer’s work was regular, ongoing and systematic, not intermittent or short term as required for true casual employment,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “Crucially, the judge ruled that an employer cannot rely solely on calling a role ‘casual’. The actual nature of the work determines employment status.”

The IRC declared the worker was in fact an ongoing employee for the entire period of employment, entitling them to permanent-style conditions rather than casual arrangements.

“This is a historic win because it sets a precedent that can be applied to other CSNSW field officers, and potentially broader public sector workers, who have been engaged as long term casuals doing regular work,” said Ms Jess. “Our union will be looking into the implications this has across the NSW workforce.”

“Just calling someone a casual should not deny them the rights they would have as a permanent employee.”

UNION MEMBERS JOIN RALLY FOR GOULBURN

Union demands a lifblood to regional centre remains in place.

Around 200 PSA CPSU NSW members and supporters gathered in Goulburn in April 2026 to protest the planned closure of correctional facilities across regional NSW. At the rally General Secretary Stewart Little warned the move would devastate local jobs and undermine public safety.

The rally, held near the Goulburn Correctional Centre, brought together Correctional Officers, Community Services staff and their families, many of whom travelled from surrounding towns to show solidarity.

PSA representatives said the proposed closures would not only affect correctional staff but would have a ripple effect across communities such as Goulburn, where prisons are among the largest employers.

“Regional towns rely on these jobs,” said Mr Little. “Closing prisons without a clear plan doesn’t just displace workers,



it removes economic stability from entire communities.”

Speakers, including Prison Officers Vocational Branch Chair Darren King, highlighted the difficulty of redeployment, particularly for workers with deep family and community ties in the region.

Correctional Officers also raised concerns about overcrowding and staff safety, arguing that closing facilities

would increase pressure on remaining prisons across the state. According to the PSA, fewer facilities could mean longer commutes for prisoners’ families and reduced access to rehabilitation programs, increasing the likelihood of reoffending.

Local business owners and community members attended the rally, with some warning that fewer public sector jobs would hurt the local economy.



ON CALL: POLICE MEMBERS AT THE END OF THE LINE

Visiting the Strength Behind the Force.

The PSA hit the road to check in with members across Camden, Nepean, Campbelltown, Liverpool, and Fairfield Police Area Commands (PACs).

“Armed with Kit Kats and plenty of good conversation, we caught up with members and delegates to hear what’s happening on the ground,” said Organiser Michael Petersen (on left of photo above), who is on secondment from NSW Police. “Across

the sites, similar themes kept coming up; increasing workloads, ongoing understaffing, rostering pressures, and the impacts of restructuring. These conversations are vital and help shape the advocacy we do every day on behalf of members.

“A highlight of the visits was spending time at Penrith Police Radio, where delegate John Hughes (on right of photo above) gave the PSA a behind-the-scenes look at a busy operational radio channel servicing Liverpool and Fairfield PACs.

“That single channel covers around 63 suburbs and supports a population of almost 500,000 people, so it is no small task.”

Mr Petersen said that even during the PSA visit, members were calmly juggling

multiple urgent jobs, while also keeping on top of a long list of lower priority incidents that still need police attendance.

“Despite the pressure, their professionalism and focus were on full display,” he said.

On top of dispatch-assist duties, members were also taking 000 calls from the public.

“While most triple-0 calls are handled by our PSA members at the hardworking Police Link Centres in Tuggerah and Lithgow, it was great to see the flexibility and expertise required when roles intersect,” said Mr Petersen.

“We’ll be visiting those Police Link centres soon,” he said. “And yes, the Kit Kats will be coming along, too.”

AGREEMENT: DINNER IS SERVED

Meal allowance payable to members in Police.

The PSA has reached a settlement, backed by members, over back pay for meal allowances.

The agreement with the Commissioner of Police will cover evening meal allowances for employees in the Crime Scene Services Branch, other than those on an Allocator Shift.

The allowance will be paid if the member travels to perform their duties until or beyond 6.30pm whilst on shift and does not require overnight accommodation.

The allowance will be paid if the member is either required to travel a cumulative distance of 60km per shift and is 30km away from their normal



headquarters at the time of taking their meal break or is performing duties outside of their normal headquarters for a cumulative period of 4.5 hours or more on that shift.

This includes travelling to crime scene or exhibit examination.

“This is an excellent win for the members who do so much for our state,” said PSA President Nicole Jess.

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MEMBERS TALK ABOUT INCLUSION

Union holds summit on disability.

In its second forum for workers with disability, the PSA CPSU NSW discussed why workers are reluctant to fully disclose their status to their employers.

Minister for Disability Inclusion, Kate Washington, said the NSW Government was taking measures “across different departments” to increase inclusion. The Minister said the State Government’s workforce included 7.7 per cent of people with disability, which was “well ahead of targets”.

However, PSA CPSU NSW statistics show a greater incidence of disability in the workplace, something the minister conceded proves “there is a cultural issue where people are hiding their disability”.

Ms Washington said there were moves made to make workers more comfortable in disclosing their disability.

“The Public Service Commissioner is giving our managers a lot of tools to support workers,” she said. “It is crucial we have a front door which is welcoming.”

She said a number of NSW departments received recognition for

disability-inclusive recruitment practices, but admitted delivery of these aims needs to be consistent across the public sector.

NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner Jeff Smith talked to forum attendees about how all people benefit from an inclusive society.

“I see every day the significant impact when people are genuinely seen, genuinely involved,” he said. “Employment is critical to independent lives in the community.”

However, he said there were “lamentable levels of employment throughout Australia, and the dial around disability and employment has hardly moved in 30 years”. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and immigrants with disability were particularly poorly represented in job figures.

While the National Disability Insurance Scheme has been criticised recently, Mr Smith said it had started to improve figures. He said the NDIS has helped start to shift this, but there was still work to be done.

“The high cost of living has discouraged innovation in recruiting staff with disability,” he said. “Barriers included the belief that hiring staff with disability is expensive and staff are unreliable.”

However, he said employers should be shown that their problem-solving skills often make workers with disability more resilient and “are often the greatest innovators”.

Mr Smith added that the pandemic had proven that workers could be productive from home, which would give workers with disability better access to employment opportunities.

Other barriers that needed to be overcome included the fact “people with disability often have patchy work histories” and frequently require a more long-term approach to hiring.

“Building an inclusive workplace is not a technical enterprise,” he said. “It is something you learn by doing. You need an attitude and an outlook. You don’t need to know about every disability, you adjust as you go along.”

The forum also included information on workplace health and safety, as well as round tables on creating more inclusive workplaces.

“Unions are there to create better workplaces for all,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “Events such as this are vital in giving us the tools to create an employment market that is accessible to as diverse a workforce as possible.”

ICAC LOOKS AT WOLLONGONG UNIVERSITY CONTRACTS

CPSU NSW member acts as whistleblower.

The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is examining a series of serious allegations about governance, conflicts of interest, and potentially improper conduct by senior university officials at the University of Wollongong (UOW).

The investigation, known as Operation Scandi, reflects broader concerns about how decisions have been made at the institution and whether those decisions meet public-sector integrity standards.

The inquiry is looking into alleged conflicts of interest among senior executives, particularly involving the university's chancellor, chief governance officer, and other staff. ICAC is investigating whether these individuals failed to properly manage conflicts when appointing key personnel and engaging external consultants. For example, the appointment of an interim vice-chancellor who retained links to a consulting firm

that later received lucrative contracts has raised concerns about impartial decision-making and transparency.

ICAC is also looking at how consultancy contracts were awarded. Under scrutiny is work given to consulting firms such as Aspirall Consulting International and KordaMentha.

ICAC is also looking into allegations of favouritism and manipulation of recruitment processes. Specifically, it will assess whether internal hiring and governance appointments were improperly influenced or "subverted" to benefit certain individuals or associates.

Claims that jobs or positions may have been arranged for particular people raise concerns about merit-based hiring and institutional integrity.

The investigation has been triggered in part by testimony from CPSU NSW Delegate Lisa Simmons, as well as a NSW parliamentary inquiry into the university sector.

Evidence presented to Parliament included claims of centralised decision-making, lack of transparency, and a culture that discouraged staff from raising concerns.

TAFE TALKS THE FUTURE



Members share concerns with management and the industrial umpire.

The TAFE Departmental Committee met with management and a Fair Work Commissioner to discuss issues affecting members at the vocational training body.

The Fair Work Commission facilitated an Interest Based Consultative Committee meeting between TAFE NSW and the CPSU NSW to discuss issues affecting members.

Discussions focused on reaching an agreement ahead of bargaining for the next Enterprise Agreement.

UNION AWARDS ANNUAL PRIZE TO STUDENTS

Students receive boost.

The PSA awarded four John D'Arcy memorial prizes recognising outstanding achievement by second and third year University of Sydney students in Government.

The Public Service Association of NSW John S. D'arcy Memorial Prize was established in 1931 after the PSA donated £430 to the University of Sydney.

This year's prize winners are seen here with PSA CPSU NSW University of Sydney Professional Staff Union delegate Tama Woodbury (far left). The winners were, from second left, Max Wyer, Benjamin Cullen and Thomas Barrington. Another recipient, Isabella Wood, is not pictured.



CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES THE CHAMPIONS IN THE NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

PSA highlights the people whose work keeps NSW safe.



PSA General Secretary, Stewart Little launched a new campaign for NSW State Emergency Service (SES) staff: *Value Us Because We Value You.*

The campaign was launched at a state-wide meeting of NSW SES staff on 6 May 2026.

“The campaign recognises the critical role salaried staff play in supporting volunteers and protecting communities across NSW, both during major operations and throughout non-operational periods,” said Mr Little. “Behind every NSW SES response are dedicated staff working tirelessly to ensure volunteers are prepared, supported, and equipped to do their jobs safely and effectively.

“From training and planning, to logistics, systems support, and incident management, staff provide the foundation that enables volunteers to serve their communities.”

The campaign was designed when it became evident to the union that while the contribution of NSW SES volunteers is valued and respected, it is important to

recognise that staff are equally essential to the effectiveness of the service.

“Without properly resourced staff, volunteers cannot operate at the level required to respond to emergencies across the state,” said PSA Senior Organiser Anne Kennelly.

“A key focus of this campaign is the need for ongoing and sustainable funding for the NSW SES, not only during high-profile operational periods, but also during quieter, non-operational years.

“These periods are critical for planning, training, capability development, and strengthening systems that underpin emergency response.”

PSA Delegates met with Minister Jihad Dib to press for better funding for emergency services. They also highlighted challenges with systems, resourcing, and workforce support and discussed the growing demands placed on staff supporting both business-as-usual and operational requirements.

“The PSA will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of SES members to ensure their contributions are recognised and properly supported,” said Mr Little.

PSA MEETS UP WITH RFS MEMBERS



Blue Mountains members talk unionism and a bonus payment coming their way.

Conditions may have been cold at the Katoomba Rural Fire Service (RFS) Fire Control Centre, but as members said, the rain means there is less need to “put the wet stuff on the red stuff”.

The meeting discussed the \$1000 cost-of-living adjustment payment heading to members’ pay packets, as well as other issues facing the RFS.

Fire Control Centre members joined those from the Mitigation Crew for the RFS Joint Consultative Committee afterwards.

LOCAL MP OPENS NEWCASTLE OFFICE

Union gets a stronger foothold in the Hunter.

The PSA CPSU NSW officially opened its new Newcastle office in March, marking a significant expansion of the union's regional presence in the Hunter.

Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp officially opened the office in front of about 60 guests. Other MPs at the event included Minister for Families and Communities, Kate Washington; and Member for Wallsend, Sonia Hornery.

“This represents a major investment in supporting Public Sector workers across Newcastle and surrounding Hunter communities,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little.

The office, at 24 Maitland Road, Islington, includes training facilities, which means members will not have to travel to Sydney for face-to-face courses.

PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess emphasised the deep historical connection, noting the union's presence in Newcastle dates back to 1899. She highlighted that



the office would ensure members have local access to support and advocacy.

Mr Little said the new site kept the union “right alongside” members in their workplaces and communities.

The union owns the new facility, and is

renovating new facilities in Wollongong, too. It also owns PSA House in Sydney.

“Owning these assets means our union has a solid financial foundation,” said Mr Little. “This is good news for our members who work hard for NSW.”



NEW MEMBER LEARNS POWER OF UNION

PSA visits Trustee and Guardian Wollongong office.

The PSA signed up new members on a visit to the Illawarra region.

“It was great visit to the Wollongong office with the metro and regional organisers, building relationships with workplace delegate Nicholas, and a new member who wanted to know more about the long list of benefits for members,” said Organiser Alex Sala.

“It was a great opportunity to increase union presence and visibility in the workplace, to talk to members and non members and to update the union notice board.”



TAYLORISM AND OPEN-PLAN: TAILOR-MADE FOR THE BOSS

Research shows we work better with a bit of peace.

Frederick Winslow Taylor, American inventor and engineer, is widely regarded as the founder of 'scientific management'. Broadly speaking, Taylorism guides a way of working designed to improve organisational efficiency. Workers are required to have more clearly defined roles, work more effectively, and accept clearly defined levels of hierarchy within the organisation.

One of the tenets of Taylorism is the open-plan office. A workplace trend that has cemented itself as the dominant office design. Although study after study concludes open plan is a detrimental design, employers rarely consider alternatives.

How did Taylor's office design become so popular with bosses?

In 1906, the opening of the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo, New York marked the birth of the modern office building with its vast open floors. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright was inspired by the grandeur of cathedrals, both for aesthetic reasons and to meet the growing need for employee supervision and control. Taylor's open-plan office layout fit incongruently into Wright's cathedral-like aesthetics, and Taylorism, as it came to be known, became popular with bosses.

After World War II, the Taylorist office design went out of fashion, as union membership grew among office workers, and as the demography of offices changed. What had been a male dominion for 100 years was now a co-ed space. As the popular

UK publication headlined in 1968, "Would you let your daughter work in an open space?" Organisations needed to provide a comfortable environment for all workers, which facilitated the 'modest tray' to cover the front of the desks and the legs, office partitions and later, the cubicle.

Until the 2000s office workers largely enjoyed semi-private workspaces, which allowed some buffer from the often-noisy open spaces to concentrate on work, and to customise a small space to make an optimal work environment. However, Silicon Valley became a model of innovation and productivity. Most office workspaces ended up not with a Frank Ghery designed inspiration space, but with rows and rows of desks sans partitions, and 'break out' spaces with no privacy, or comfort, for meetings.

COVID-19 threw a giant spanner into the way office spaces worked, with working from home exploding.

Although bosses argued for a return to the office, they also took advantage of staff using their homes as a workspace, and downsized offices to reduce budgets. And with smaller spaces, open-plan design is by far the favoured option for employers. When staff are forced back into the office, they now often need to hot desk, or work in sub-optimal situations; even having to go to cafes to work in some instances. The office is often not an attractive proposition.

Countless studies have measured how open-plan affects workers. There are very few conclusions that favour the open plan design, particularly when measuring staff well-being.

"Architectural Design Innovations for Health and Wellness: Leveraging AI and Digital Technologies", a feature

in the international, peer-reviewed Buildings published research which used 26 people, aged in their mid-20s to mid-60s, fitted with wireless electroencephalogram (EEG) headsets to measure how hard the brain is working by tracking electrical activity in their brains. Each participant was monitored while completing the tasks in two different settings: an open plan workspace with colleagues nearby, and a small, enclosed work pod with clear glazed panels. In open-plan participants' brains had to work harder to maintain performance. Even when we try to ignore distractions, our brain must expend mental effort to filter them out. In contrast, the pod eliminated most background noise and visual disruptions, allowing participants' brains to work more efficiently.

Moreover, separate studies done by Ipsos and Workspace Futures have shown open-plan significantly increases illness rates, with up to 62 per cent more sick leave compared to private offices. The design facilitates the rapid spread of viruses, increases stress from noise, and is linked to higher rates of Sick Building Syndrome (headaches, respiratory issues).

The PSA's Industrial Manager Dylan Smith says "it's clear, empirically, and what we hear from our members consistently that we all work better and much more efficiently in well designed, partitioned workspaces, and we are way healthier if we avoid the open plan office design."

Mr Smith added, "And if bosses allow some percentage of working from home into the mix, we'd have a healthy, amazingly performing NSW public service."

NEW WHS CODES OF PRACTICE GIVE UNIONS POWER TO PROTECT MEMBERS

Workers will see safer workplaces.

From 1 July 2026, SafeWork NSW Codes of Practice will become mandatory compliance benchmarks rather than just guidance. This will have a profound impact on workplaces covered by the PSA CPSU NSW.

Employers will be obliged to adopt the approved Code of Practice or demonstrate a higher standard of risk management. New codes covering Healthcare and Social Assistance and Fatigue Management, including safe rostering, will be enforced.

“The changes significantly strengthen the legal weight of codes, requiring proactive adoption, not just consideration,” said PSA CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Dylan Smith. “While high-risk sectors such as construction and healthcare are top priorities for these updated, legally binding standards, our members will still be covered by the new regime.”

“Areas that particularly affect our membership, such as fatigue and psychosocial risks, will be covered by several new and updated codes released in February 2026.”

Mr Smith said the union will not hesitate to take action under the new provisions. Registered industrial organisations, including unions, will have the power to initiate civil penalty proceedings for WHS contraventions after consulting with SafeWork NSW.

“Our members’ safety at work is of paramount importance,” he said.

Legislative amendments expand the powers of WHS entry permit holders, enabling them to access digital work systems, including emails, algorithmic tools and other digital platforms, when investigating suspected WHS breaches. The powers of WHS entry permit holders to require employers to provide reasonable assistance to access and inspect digital work systems will be subject to guidelines published by SafeWork NSW.



HSR TRAINING ON OFFER

Health and Safety Representative (HSR) training available to members.

The PSA CPSU NSW is an Authorised Training Provider approved to deliver SafeWork NSW-developed HSR training materials.

Participants who complete the approved training receive a SafeWork NSW Health and Safety Representative Training Statement of Attendance issued by the Public Service Association of NSW.

“This training is essential

for elected Health and Safety Representatives seeking to exercise their full legislative powers, including the issuing of Provisional Improvement Notices and the direction to cease unsafe work,” said Industrial Manager Dylan Smith.

“The course also covers the purpose and principles of WHS legislation, consultation requirements, hazard identification, incident notification, workplace inspections, issue resolution, and risk management.

“Members can apply for training through the PSA CPSU NSW website.”

KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR: DELEGATE WINS MEMBER A NEW ROLE AFTER RESTRUCTURE

PSA fights for a member's job: and wins.

When Transport for NSW (TfNSW) PSA member Brittini Veilo was told her position was to be abolished, she went to her union delegate.

The delegate, Rachel Knight, got straight into action.

"She explained her story to me," said Ms Knight. "Her role had been abolished. She was a grade 5, acting as a 9 and had done so for nearly two years. We spoke about her history as an Aboriginal cadet.

"She went through the Transport-led program for two years, and then eight years after that, had worked her way up into the acting grade 9 role.

"Then suddenly one day, her position, her substantive role of a grade 5 is abolished."

Ms Knight knew Ms Veilo had a case.

"We held many meetings just discussing the new team structure," said Ms Knight. "She was very upset and worried about her family. She had two children since she'd started work at Transport."

Ms Veilo said she appreciated the advice from her delegate.

"I contacted Rachel just to see where I stood and if the union could help me," she said. "From the get go, Rachel provided a lot of advice and helped me get through the right channels and what to do."

The abolition of Ms Veilo's role contrasted to the way she had been used in TfNSW promotional material.

"They'd used her as a poster girl in National Indigenous Television articles and also in the *Koori Mail*," said Ms Knight.

Ms Knight said the pathway offered by the grade 5 job was ideal for members such as Ms Veilo.

"One of the arguments we used was that, how can people coming into the government work their way up if they haven't had the privilege of going to university and starting up at a higher



grade?" she said. "That step of grading up has created some wonderful careers for people who maybe otherwise wouldn't be able to get further up the ladder.

"I'm glad to say that after five months, when the consultation went to determination, that her position or a similar grade 5 position had been created. They also created, I think, four other grade 5 positions.

"So there was a career step for people coming into Transport. I believe she would not have been able to retain that position without the union."

Ms Knight said the case also exposed some gaps in programs aimed at getting Aboriginal workers into positions with TfNSW.

"There is a lot of information on Departmental websites and the Premier's Department websites, which makes you think that Aboriginal people are considered in every decision," she said. "Transport can't even tell me how many Aboriginal people they have working for them or designated pathways. They don't appear to have been a consideration in the restructure."

SIGHT AND SOUND

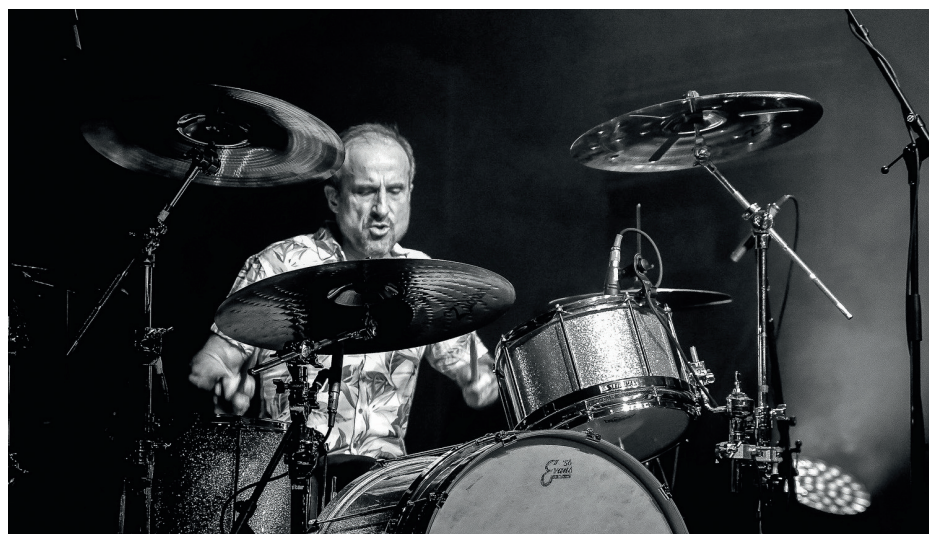
Art Gallery Installation Manager Nik Rieth has played in some of Australia's best-known bands.

Away from the Art Gallery of NSW Installation Manager and Delegate Nik Rieth can be found at the back of the stage at gigs by ARIA Hall of Fame band the Hoodoo Gurus.

“My parents both loved music and parties,” said Mr Rieth. “They also encouraged my brothers and me to take up an instrument. So I started in school and local brass bands, got together with friends in a few bands that got gigs.”

In the 1980s, the pub rock scene meant you were never far from a night out.

His career as a drummer blossomed, and Mr Rieth played with what he



calls “a few well-known bands in certain circles: The Celibate Rifles, Tumbleweed, Deniz Tek Group, New Christs, Radio Birdman.”

In 2014, he joined the Hoodoo Gurus.

As the Installation Manager at the Art Gallery of NSW, Mr Rieth finds parallels between music and visual art.

“To me the only essential differences are which senses are touched by it and how long it takes to get you,” he said. “Pop art is also really graphic eye candy.

“I was really fond of listening to records and reading the sleeves. I still have some

records where the music is not as good as the visual art on it.”

Mr Rieth said he was “a bit of a handyman for artist friends and would help put up small shows”. A former bandmate, one he still works with, helped get him a few casual shifts at the Art Gallery of NSW. He received training at work and is now employed as a permanent member of staff.

“It wasn't really what I would view as a profession but more of a job then,” he said. “But the skills and complexity have increased a lot over the years.”

CREATIVE CONVERGENCE

Cultural Institutions meet up.

Delegates from the Cultural Institutions Advisory Group held their first planning meeting for 2026

The group represents PSA members at the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Museums of History NSW, the State Library of NSW, Destination NSW, and Create NSW.

The group met at Create NSW to discuss key issues facing the sector and how, with the support of the PSA, positive change can be achieved.

PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright (second from left) was in attendance.



Berowra

Public School



LETTER TO THE TOP

Minister hears from union.

The PSA has written to the Minister for Education and Deputy Premier, Prue Car, outlining issues facing members in schools.

“As the union representing support staff in schools, we are confident the Minister will address issues we outlined,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess.

PSA Schools Delegates have identified the increasing demands on School Administrative and Support Staff (SASS) as one of the most significant issues facing members.

“Across almost all SASS classifications, members are reporting a rapid increase in the engagement, coordination and day-to-day management of specialist allied health practitioners and external service providers,” said Ms Jess. “This expansion is occurring without the accompanying staffing, systems, training, or recognition required to manage these additional responsibilities safely and sustainably.”

Other issues include staff being responsible for the onboarding and compliance checks of providers and

School Learning Support Officers and wellbeing roles being lumped with responsibility of supporting students with disrupted classrooms and routines.

“The PSA’s position is clear, if schools are going to allow increasing numbers of external providers, the workload impact must be recognised, resourced, and managed – not absorbed by already stretched SASS staff,” said Industrial Manager Siobhan Callinan.

The PSA supports the Government’s commitment to build 100 new pre-schools. However, the union has expressed reservations about whether the significant administrative, School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) and General Assistant (GA) workload associated with these sites has been properly assessed.

“It has long been the position of the PSA that the additional entitlement for preschools is inadequate,” said Ms Callinan. “But the roll out of the additional 100 locations brings with it significant workload.”

The letter also raised serious concerns with the implementation of the increased GA staffing entitlement. The PSA is seeking an urgent review if this has impacted workload.

“For GAs there is often an expectation

that they liaise with contractors, escalating workload pressures beyond the requirements of their substantive roles.”

NEW AGREEMENT SETS THE STANDARD ON FLEXIBILITY

PSA negotiates a first for members.

Members at the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) have overwhelmingly endorsed a flexible working agreement.

The agreement, the first of its kind for NESA, brings members into parity with teachers.

Under the agreement, members will not lose their access to overtime if they are directed to work.

“This is a great win for our members who do so much to maintain the state’s excellent teaching standards,” said PSA CPSU NSW Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “It is yet another great example of the power of belonging to a union that fights hard for its members.”

OUR MEMBERS ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE

All our members are essential workers. Every day PSA CPSU NSW members are working hard for our state making it a better place for all to live, learn and work in.

They truly are Champions of the State.



Manjula has been employed as an Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Caseworker with the OOHC Hub Macarthur since 2023.

“I am responsible for supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people in NSW; those who are unable to live safely with their families due to significant risk concerns,” she said. “My work involves overseeing the safety, stability, and wellbeing of children in statutory care, while also providing guidance, advocacy, and practical support to their carers.

“The OOHC system plays a vital role in protecting children across NSW. It ensures that children who have experienced trauma, neglect, or harm are provided with a safe, nurturing and stable environment where their developmental, emotional, cultural, and educational needs can be met.

“Through OOHC, children are supported to build trusting relationships, recover from adverse experiences, and develop to their full potential.”

Manjula is a Champion of the State.



Matthew is a Champion of the State and part of the team at the Supreme Court of NSW, where he works as a registry officer in the finance department.

“We reconcile banking,” he said. “We accept monies from security or if there’s a medical settlement, we have to take those fees in.

“Even though it’s the finance section, pretty much everyday brings something a little bit different.”

Working for the people of NSW and the justice system that protects them is a rewarding role.

“I like the way my job gives me a sense of accomplishment pretty much every day, because once your reconciliation is done, and the bottom line is zero, you’ve achieved what you need to,” he said.

Matthew is proud to work in a workplace that performs a vital role for the state.

“If the courts aren’t independent and don’t have their own structure to them, then confidence in the whole system is compromised,” he said.



Champion of the State **Lachlan** works as a Horticultural Labourer at the Royal Botanic Garden.

“I love working outdoors in nature,” he said. “Preferably with native plants.”

Lachlan said he likes the fact more people are appreciating native flora over introduced species.

He said as well as educating people about Australia’s extraordinary plants and trees, the Botanic Garden plays an important role in preserving the environment of NSW.

“My first job out of school, was doing bush regeneration out in western Sydney,” he said. “I realised a lot of the regeneration would be for development companies, so therefore just ticking a box for them and not really having much of an environmental impact.

“So, I thought the Botanic Garden would be the way to go, as there’s a lot more education and more of an impact on the public rather than a just working on a small park in the middle of a housing development.”

STEWART HOUSE CELEBRATES 95 YEARS

For many years, PSA CPSU NSW members have supported Stewart House.

Stewart House, which this year marks 95 years of supporting disadvantaged children across NSW and the ACT, provides children with a residential stay focused on health and wellbeing.

Stewart House gives them access to medical, dental, vision and hearing checks, counselling, and structured learning activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Each year, 1600 public children take part in the Stewart House Program. Consistent funding from workplace giving allows the organisation to plan its programs with certainty. It gives it the financial stability to deliver a structured 12-day program, which helps children build confidence, improve their health and engage more fully with learning.

“To all our members who have supported through payroll giving or other means, thank you,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “Your generosity directly funds the services Stewart House provides and the outcomes it achieves.”

Stewart House is the NSW Department of Education’s “Charity of Choice”. Since the late 1970s, school staff across NSW

have contributed to Stewart House through their fortnightly pays. That consistent support has been critical to maintaining and planning programs which costs around \$2,500 per child for each 12-day stay. All children attend free of charge, thanks to the generosity of supporters.

In October 2025, the NSW Department of Education transitioned workplace giving to its exclusive salary packaging provider, replacing the former payroll system and expanding visibility to more than 100,000 staff. Giving through Smart is straightforward, tax effective, and can be managed alongside existing salary packaging arrangements.

Although participation in the new system is still developing, the expanded reach via Smart creates a significant opportunity. Even modest contributions can collectively make a real difference, especially for a charity where only 8 per cent of funding comes from government support.

Stewart House is working closely with the PSA and the NSW Department of Education to raise awareness and encourage greater participation. Workplace giving remains one of the most efficient ways to support its work, providing predictable income that directly funds services for public school children who need additional care and encouragement.



“If you already salary package through Smart, simply log in and select Stewart House under workplace giving,” said Mr Little. “If you work in the education sector and have not yet joined, now is a wonderful time to join.”

Staff across the NSW Government, including state departments and agencies, may also be able to support Stewart House through their workplace giving programs. Members should contact their HR team to confirm what is available.





A HELPING HAND THROUGH CANCER

Being diagnosed with cancer can turn life upside down. But PSA members and their immediate families don't have to face it alone. Through a partnership with Osara Health, members have access to a free, personalised Cancer Coach Program designed to support people through every stage of their cancer journey.

The program pairs participants with a dedicated cancer coach who provides one-on-one guidance across physical wellbeing, emotional support, and the practical challenges that come with navigating treatment alongside work and daily life. It's available to all PSA CPSU NSW members and their immediate family members at no cost.

Lachlan Thurtell, a Threatened Species Officer in the Ecosystems and Threatened Species branch of Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation (CPHR), and a union member for five years, is one member who has experienced the program firsthand.

Mr Thurtell is currently going through treatment for a rare cancer called a Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumour (GIST).

"It really took me by surprise as I wasn't experiencing any symptoms at the time and life was going along at its usual busy pace," he said. "I did a couple of tests for an unrelated issue and a lesion was picked up during an ultrasound, which I was told could have been a few different things. A few scans, blood tests, and a biopsy later I found out that I had cancer."

The experience reinforced something important for Mr Thurtell: "It really highlighted to me the importance of going for a check-up or booking in early when you notice something."

With a few uncertain months between the initial finding and his diagnosis, he describes "a fair bit of uncertainty and anxiety during this time." His treatment is ongoing, and while there have been challenges, he says "it's important to have something each day to get up for and keep going."

Mr Thurtell first heard about the Cancer Coach Program through the union's member emails. His reasoning for signing up was straightforward: "There would be nothing to gain from not participating and perhaps something to learn if I gave it a go. Another tool in the kit to dealing with it all."

What stood out most was the one-on-one coaching. "I feel as though I already knew a fair bit about staying fit and healthy, but being in the program definitely creates some accountability for ensuring that you're looking after yourself in the ways you should be as you navigate treatment," he says.

Day to day, the program helped Mr Thurtell stay on track, "ensuring that I was doing the right things to help make the treatment as effective as possible while staying healthy."

His message to fellow members who might be hesitant? "Definitely give it a go! There's a lot of good information provided through the coaches and the app that can help you through your journey."

Osara Health offers programs for members and immediate family diagnosed or caring for a loved one. If you or an immediate family member has been affected by cancer and would like to access the program, contact the PSA CPSU NSW for more information.

Details on how to access all these benefits are available on the PSA CPSU NSW website.



FACING THE FUTURE

PSA CPSU NSW members fight for a better tomorrow. And their union fights for them.

When the PSA CPSU NSW wins, it is not just its members who benefit, it is the people of NSW who face a better future. The state is affected by the extraordinary economic, social and technological changes gripping our planet. Whether it is technical disruption in our workplaces, adjusting to a changing climate or dealing with increasing inequality and political polarisation, PSA CPSU NSW members are there, helping the people of NSW.

A safer future

This year the union launched a campaign to better coordinate services available to those experiencing domestic violence. On the back of a successful campaign to strengthen bail laws, our push for a government-led service to respond to domestic violence will save lives.

Members are found in the shining example our campaign is based on; the Mount Druitt Family Violence Service.

These are just some of the members fighting for a safer future. Whether it is NSW Police staff examining crime scenes and protecting buildings, Prison Officers operating gaols or members ensuring our courts operate efficiently, there are PSA CPSU NSW members working to protect the people of the state.

During crises such as bushfires, floods, pandemics and economic downturns, it is PSA CPSU NSW members who coordinate responses, deliver assistance and ensure continuity of essential services. Private markets alone cannot guarantee universal access, fairness or long-term planning in areas such as health, education, housing and infrastructure.

PSA CPSU NSW members in agencies such as Naitonal Parks, the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service, and Fire and Rescue are there to protect people when nature goes rogue: an increasingly common event as the climate changes.

A smarter future

In a changing world, public schools, universities and TAFE are vital. Members in all three sectors are creating a workforce that can respond to a world earlier

generations would fail to recognise.

Public schools give everyone in NSW a chance at a world-class education. They produce the workers, thinkers and consumers of tomorrow.

True examples of public service, the schools run by the state of NSW are open to all, regardless of income, religion or academic ability. Not only are they open to all, PSA members are working at these schools, ensuring students get the most from their educational experience and their best chance at a brighter future.

For many students, the PSA member working as a School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) is vital for their ability to keep up with lessons.

“Working in the public schooling system for the past 20 years I have seen a huge increase of enrolments in kids with disabilities, whether that be physical, behavioural or diagnosed disabilities,” said SLSO Lisa Craddock, who works at Kincumber Public School in the Central Coast (pictured below). “The role of an SLSO has certainly changed and honestly if we were not boots and eyes on the ground, teachers would drown.

“I love my job. I believe schools would suffer drastically without us as part of the team.”

In addition to her role as Senior Vice-President of the PSA, Juliette Sizer (pictured over page) is a School Administrative Manager (SAM) at a school in the Northern Rivers region.

“People like Lisa hold our schools

together,” said Ms Sizer, who also chairs the union’s Schools Departmental Committee. “It is vital our schools do their utmost for all students, including those with disability who may otherwise be left behind.”

As a SAM, Ms Sizer is among the PSA members in offices keeping schools operating. In addition to these members, there are General Assistants in the grounds, Farm Assistants at certain schools, as well as Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Student Support Officers and Psychologists ensuring NSW schools are gearing towards a better future.

“Our state’s public schools are producing the thinkers and leaders of tomorrow,” she said. “It is vital they be funded and our members supported in this goal.”

NSW’s universities are engines of economic development and social advancement. With our members keeping them operating, they educate hundreds of thousands of students, conduct world-class research and act as anchors for innovation across industries such as health, technology, engineering and renewable energy.

Beyond their economic contribution, universities play a crucial civic role. They are spaces for critical inquiry, evidence-based debate and the development of new ideas. CPSU NSW members’ work helps governments make better decisions, supports industry innovation, and addresses pressing social issues facing our future, from climate science and medical breakthroughs to public policy and education reform.





“Universities like to brag that they are an important source of overseas revenue, and that is true,” said PSA CPSU NSW Vice-President Shelley Odewahn, who works at Macquarie University and has previously been employed at the University of NSW and Southern Cross University. “But it is important we acknowledge they are also gearing up our state for the future.

“The research and teaching, all supported by our hard-working members, is vital to give NSW the skills to navigate an uncertain future.

“As their union, we are there for members, fighting insecure work, funding volatility and market-driven models that prioritise short-term revenue over education. Protecting universities as public institutions rather than commercial enterprises is essential for NSW’s long-term prosperity, and your union is up for the fight.”

TAFE NSW is one of the most powerful tools available to future-proof our economy. A shining beacon of vocational education, it provides practical, industry connected education that equips people with skills for existing jobs and emerging industries. TAFE plays a particularly important role in the future prosperity of regional NSW, supporting local economies and providing pathways for young people, career changers and those facing barriers to employment. It is also critical for retraining workers as industries evolve, especially in the context of technological change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

When TAFE is underfunded or undermined by excessive privatisation, skills shortages deepen and inequality widens. Our union will fight to keep it strong.

“I’m there for students studying via our online campus, which is a growing percentage of those in TAFE,” said Kristy Quill (pictured below) who works in Education Administrative Support. “We support the teachers, so they spend more of their focus on teaching the students rather than administrative tasks.

“TAFE is important for our state’s future. It is a central part of our community, providing the training a large percentage of

our community members need to provide service for our state to operate.

It is a way people can get the training they need for their first job, to re-enter the workforce or change their careers.”

“We train the tradies to use new technology that is coming in and helping provide the technical skills and the environmental skills our state will need in the future.”

A fairer future

Members and the huge variety of roles they play in the workforce are the backbone of a fairer, more productive NSW. The state’s world-class public sector plays an indispensable role in ensuring that NSW functions effectively and equitably.

Like much of the world, NSW has seen social divisions widen, with a future that sees a bigger gap between the haves and have-nots.

With housing becoming increasingly out of reach, members in areas such as Homes NSW, Planning and Service NSW play a vital role now and into the future in ensuring a roof over one’s head is not an unattainable dream.

In her role as Senior Client Service Officer Specialist at Homes NSW, Mary-Ann McPherson works with some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

“The local Housing office will often be the first point of contact for people in crisis,” she said. “The capacity of staff to meet those people where they’re at, whilst offering support and knowledge of services available cannot be underestimated.”

Ms McPherson said the housing crisis gripping the country makes the work she



and her fellow members perform vital for a fairer future.

“The complexity of social, health and safety issues people are experiencing has been on an ever-climbing trajectory for many years,” she said. “And Homes NSW workers are the ones staffing that frontline when those people reach out at the end of the road.”

“These vital workers show up every day with the compassion and skills to assist in any way they can within the provisions of policy.”

The PSA CPSU NSW knows the housing crisis is hitting our state hard, and will campaign on this issue in the coming months.

With the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) under increased scrutiny, it is inevitable that the states take up more of the responsibility towards disability services. A strong disability sector would enable more people with disability to live with dignity, independence and inclusion. They reflect a future where diversity is increasingly taken into account.

The disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people blights Australia’s future. Whether in schools or government departments, it is members of the PSA CPSU NSW, one of the first unions in the country with an Aboriginal Council, looking to redress inequality and right historic wrongs.

A cleaner future

Whether in our cities or the untouched wilderness that blesses NSW, there are PSA CPSU NSW members working for a cleaner future for our state.

Daniel Cain (pictured right) is a Team Leader with the Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

“We’re working hard to protect the environment and threatened species for the next generation,” said Mr Cain. “We protect landscapes as diverse as Lord Howe Island, the rainforests of north east NSW and the arid deserts in the far west.”

Mr Cain said the work of members such as him results in an improved in national parks, crown land and private holdings.

PSA CPSU NSW Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright said members such as Mr Cain are just part of the picture.

“Our guardians of the natural world include those in National Parks, Fisheries, Local Land Services and Forestry Corporation, to the Environment Protection Authority and its staff cleaning up polluted sites, PSA CPSU NSW members are leaving us with a cleaner, greener future,” he said.

“A cleaner future also relies on the research

produced in our universities and TAFE colleges and in our electricity providers.

“Without our members, and a union backing them, NSW would be a far less clean place to live.”

A wealthier future

PSA CPSU NSW members are essential for economic stability. The pay rises won by our union provide badly needed incomes for our state, particularly the regions that so often bear the brunt of economic fluctuations and environmental degradation.

Their work also creates the foundations

facing an entirely new challenge; artificial intelligence. A tool that can enhance our productivity and output, but comes with the risks associated with an all-encompassing change to the way we work.

In an era of uncertainty and rapid change, one lesson is clear: the future of NSW is built not by diminishing the public good, but by strengthening it as we face the future together.

The PSA CPSU NSW will guide its members as they guide the rest of the state towards a better tomorrow.



for a more dynamic, forward-facing economy. We work together to create a smarter, better-educated workforce and safe, dynamic conditions for businesses to operate.

“We know that a well-resourced public sector can drive what is already the nation’s wealthier state,” said Mr Wright. “It provides certainty and security for businesses to thrive.”

A certain future

As NSW grapples with increasingly complex challenges, strong public administration will be even more critical.

Undermining the public sector through chronic understaffing, outsourcing or wage suppression weakens the state’s capacity to meet these challenges.

Our union is also here for the members

An exciting future

The PSA CPSU NSW is more than a movement fighting on industrial issues.

In recent years it has examined what sort of society its members live in.

“We are part of the country’s biggest social movement,” said Mr Little. “This year we have aimed higher and are campaigning on issues that blight our state, such as domestic violence and the housing crisis.”

“These are important issues to be addressed for the sake of everyone in NSW.”

“With our union fighting hard alongside our members, we can together make the most of the dramatic upheavals we face. We can adapt to a changing future and create better workplaces, work in better conditions and create a better NSW for all.”



FIGHTING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The 2026 PSA CPSU NSW Annual Conference looked at how our state will operate in the future.

The 2026 Annual Conference on 28, and 29 May looked into the future of the PSA CPSU NSW and the world in which its members will work. The conference saw discussion on two ground-breaking campaigns that will affect not only union members, but will aim to improve the lives of all people in NSW.

The theme of Conference 2026 was Facing the Future. And at the beginning of the second half of this decade, is an extremely fitting theme. The union's members are on the front lines of major issues facing the people of NSW, and are both personally experiencing these issues and working in the departments which must deal with them. The PSA CPSU NSW's 2026 campaigns go straight to the core of how government can address the most serious issues: housing, job insecurity influenced by technology, and domestic and family violence.

"Conference gave the PSA CPSU NSW the chance to listen to the delegates who represent our membership and identify areas where the union and membership can work to significantly change things for the better. Much better," said the union's General Secretary Stewart Little. "The strength of the union, and the knowledge and experience of each of us collectively led us to activate campaigns that can achieve great outcomes, and Conference offers an opportunity to hear from experts in their fields, and the experts living and working in our communities. The membership."

Country Conference on the afternoon of 27 May preceded the Annual Conference. It introduced the theme of Conference 2026, *Facing the Future*, to regional members, who are profoundly affected by changes facing the state's workers.

Members were welcomed by the PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Liaison Officer Ricky Walford, who reminded us that

welcome to country is literally a unifying action, not a divisive one as suggested recently by conservative pundits and by hecklers at Anzac Day ceremonies.

"You're Australian, I'm Australian, it just happens that my ancestors have had this protocol in place for over 40,000 years", Mr Walford said.

Guest speaker Janelle Saffin, NSW Minister for Recovery, North Coast and Small Business, brought a positive and hopeful voice for the regions, talking about changes in preparedness for the state's regional areas; and that the future in country NSW needs to be about readiness for natural disasters, and public servants are crucial to this. Ms Saffin said the government "has to mitigate for the risks before they strike and ensure that we're there for the long-haul".

**TWO GROUND-BREAKING
CAMPAIGNS WILL IMPROVE
THE LIVES OF ALL PEOPLE
IN NSW**

Delegates Anna Thomas and David Cox, from State Emergency Services talked about the essential services that employed staff at the SES provide, ensuring that our volunteers have everything they need, when they need it. Ms Thomas also stated "we are really, really grateful to everyone here and at the PSA, and we are proud to stand together with you all." She went on to say that she would love to see delegates and members "in orange" in reference to the orange overalls SES volunteers wear.

Regional membership and recruitment were presented by Glenn Duncan, Senior Organiser and the PSA's Research Officer Lara Westwood. Attendees learned the union's membership, in terms of geographical distribution, is almost exactly half metropolitan-based, and half regionally based. Retention rates in the regions are much stronger though, suggesting that PSA CPSU NSW country members hang on to their membership through thick and thin.



**'WHAT IF THE PUBLIC
SECTOR WAS ACTUALLY
THE SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEM?'**

Richard Denniss from The Australia Institute gave members a common-sense, political-spin-free talk on Australian economics. PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess said that if Mr Denniss was her economics teacher, she would have passed with flying colours. Mr Denniss, whose presentation came with a language warning, which some delegates no doubt enjoyed, reminded members that “we are not in a housing crisis, we are in a taxation crisis, and certain groups are doing better than fine in the current economic environment. Just not the majority of Australians.

“What if the government just built more houses?” Mr Denniss said. “And what if the value of those houses went up and the government made some money off them? And if the value went down, then good, we need the price of housing to go down anyway.”

Then Mr Denniss said what the PSA has been saying for years, “What if the public sector was actually the solution to the problem?”

After a welcome to country from long-time associate of the PSA, Nathan Moran, Chief Executive of the Metropolitan Local

Aboriginal Land Council, Mr Little gave the delegates a summary of what has been a very busy year for the union.

“I’ve never felt this positive about the public sector. I really haven’t,” Mr Little told the delegates. “We’ve got huge challenges in front of us, but I know we will meet them head on, and together we will grow our great union, with unity, strength and respect.”

Nicole Jess, President, gave delegates a welcome to conference, commenting of course on the state’s win at the State of Origin the night before. On the theme of the Conference, Facing the Future, Ms Jess said “The future isn’t something that crashes over us, it is something we meet, determined, informed, and organised, together.”

NSW Premier Chris Minns addressed the membership for the fifth occasion on the first full day of Annual Conference. The Premier formally assured the membership that the government would honour its payment of \$1000 cost-of-living allowance, negotiated by the PSA two years ago when the union got rid of the public service wages cap.

The Premier went on to say though that “The PSA doesn’t pull any punches, and we’ve been on the receiving end of some tough delegates, and some tough rhetoric.

“But I expect nothing less from a union that cares about its members and wants to make the state better.”

The PSA CPSU NSW’s DV Needs Public Services campaign was launched on 4 May 2026, and made headlines across

the state and the nation. An update on the campaign, and background behind its significance was presented by a panel which included Dilsat Seyis and Julie-Ann Grigoriadis, both from the Department of Communities and Justice’s Western Sydney, Nepean and Blue Mountains Family Violence Service.

Ms Grigoriadis said, “It’s great not only to support a woman leaving violence, but also her kids. Though childcare, counselling, and liaising with everyone in all the other agencies we work with.”

Mr Little said this campaign shows the PSA CPSU NSW has a vital role in the state, not only on behalf of its members but for anyone experiencing violence in the home.

“We are doing this because it is the right thing to do,” he said. “If successful, it will save lives.”

Members were treated to a glimpse into what life, and work, is like for public servants in Donald Trump’s USA at present when Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright spoke with Elissa McBride, from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees’ union.

Public Sector Cuts: The American Experience provided the delegates with a frank, but surprisingly positive talk from Ms McBride. Although job cuts and cuts to just about everything in the public service are being experienced by civil servants in the US, they are fighting back, and achieving wins in courts across the nation.

“We do have programs like Medicare





and Medicaid that, under Trump's administration, are being slashed, but we are fighting, and we have a lot of members who are doing accountability action with their elected officials." Ms McBride said. "Members are lobbying, sending emails, making phone calls, and attending No Kings demonstrations.

"But we are really looking forward to getting back to the polls again and making a change that way."

Nathan Keats from McNally Jones Staff and Kym Ward, PSA CPSU NSW's manager of member services presented the next giant campaign for NSW's public servants, the Salaries Case.

Despite Mr Keats calm demeanour, this is a serious and significant campaign by the PSA CPSU NSW. He told delegates "We are going for a three-year deal, and asking for a 25 per cent pay rise for members."

Unsurprisingly, this was popular with attendees.

A panel of experts tackled the next issue: Artificial Intelligence is Here: What Does it Mean in the Public Sector?

Dr Ziba Gandomkar Senior, Lecturer at the University of Sydney; Joseph Mitchell from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU); Laura Christie, Deputy Secretary of Digital NSW at the NSW Department of Customer Service; and the PSA's Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright were introduced by *Robocop* – or at least a bloody and foretelling scene from the 1987 film by Paul Verhoeven.

Mr Wright explained to the delegates that movie director Verhoeven slipped into cinemas and our consciousness a gory action flick, but it has turned out to be a highly prophetic and politically smart piece of cinema that warns us of greed-driven privatisation, over-reliance

of untested technology, and the thin line of between organised crime and corporatism. Issues AI could be ripe for.

Turning the topic to a much brighter possibility concerning AI, the ACTU's Joseph Mitchell told us that "there is absolutely a pro-worker future with AI." He went on to say that "there isn't a single AI tool out there today that can beat the passion, creativity, judgement, focus, expertise or empathy of working people."

**'FACING THE FUTURE
WILL BE A MUCH MORE
OPTIMISTIC ENDEAVOUR
WITH A STRONG UNION'**

To round out the full day of conference, four young delegates, Brooke Blatch from Child Protection, Lovdeep Singh from SafeWork; Rachel Summers from Corrective Services; and James Ricupito from Art Gallery of NSW discussed the Future of Unionism.

Ms Summers made the heartening statement that growing up in regional NSW, her father was a nightshift coal miner, and that belonging to union "was not an abstract thing. The reason he [her father] was coming home every morning to make breakfast for us was because he was part of a union that made sure he had a safe workplace. So when I joined the workforce, the first thing I did was join the union. In my case, the PSA."

On the final day of Conference, the session began with a great video recap of

the Country Conference, and the first day of Annual Conference.

There was no light session to start the day. Troy Wright, PSA CPSU NSW's Assistant General Secretary presented a talk about his trip to Myanmar, sponsored by APHEDA. Democracy in Myanmar was not a cheerful presentation. However, it was an eye-opening insight into how fortunate Australians are to have a democratic structure in which to live, and that there are ways unionists can help their comrades in southeast Asia.

One of the most topical subjects was presented by Rose Jackson, NSW Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Water when the minister attended Conference to talk to delegates about Affordable Housing for Public Sector Workers.

With the launch of the PSA CPSU NSW's report on housing coinciding with the 2026 Annual Conference, the panel discussing Challenges in Affordable Housing was Anna Patty, PSA Principal Policy Analyst; Bernadette McMahon from Homes NSW, and Hal Pawson, Emeritus Professor of Housing from University of NSW.

"The PSA's report is undoubtedly going to be a much-quoted source in the discussions surrounding the housing crisis in NSW," said Mr Little.

In the forward to PSA Affordable Housing Survey Results and Policy Options 2026, the union's General Secretary stated that the more than 5000 public servants who responded to the survey said they are either terrified about retirement, are one rent increase, one interest rate rise or one relationship breakdown away from homelessness, have already experienced homelessness, and, worryingly, are staying in violent

relationships to avoid homelessness.

“Many told us they are skipping meals, delaying medical care, commuting hours each day, trapped in unsafe housing situations or losing hope of ever owning a home,” Mr Little said. “These are the people who are working in services committed to preventing the situations that the workers are now finding themselves in.”

Mr Little finished his statement by saying “I am determined to make this our case and make sure our members’ voices are heard. We owe that to the workers who shared their experiences with courage and honesty. And we owe it to the wider community that depends so much on a public sector workforce.”

He added that, like the campaign on domestic violence, the union’s focus on housing will benefit far more people than simply those with a PSA CPSU NSW membership card.

“Unions are about improving society,” he said. “This campaign will see more people able to afford homes and fewer

people on the street, couch-surfing or paying a vast percentage of their earnings on a place to live.

“The government can ill-afford to ignore the PSA’s survey. The recommendations are there. And our members are ready to act on them.

“Conference this year gave us a unique opportunity to bring our expertise and passion as unionists to the forefront for a better state for all.

“Facing the future will be a much more optimistic endeavour with a strong union at the helm.”





NSW needs a purpose built, publicly owned DV SYSTEM staffed by a professional DV response force

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NSW needs a purpose built, publicly owned DV SYSTEM staffed by a professional DV response force

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A STATE ISSUE



Union takes action on a nationwide crisis.

The PSA CPSU NSW has launched a campaign to put the public sector in the centre of the state's response to the rising levels of domestic violence (DV) that blight NSW. The campaign's core message is simple: domestic violence needs public services.

"It is not about kicking the non-government sector out of the space," said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. "It is about the State Government taking a leading role in coordinating the many groups, both government and non-government, that people turn to when they experience violence in the home."

The Western Sydney, Nepean and Blue Mountains Family Violence Service, based in Mount DrUITT, is the template upon which the union is basing its

campaign. Mr Little said it serves as "a one-stop shop" in the area.

"Such a service should be available all over the state," he said. "We will argue for a fundamental shift away from outsourced service models toward a publicly run system integrated within government."

At the heart of the campaign is the claim that domestic violence, not just in NSW, but all of Australia, constitutes a national crisis that is not being adequately addressed by current

arrangements. The PSA CPSU NSW highlighted that more than 120,000 assaults each year are related to domestic violence, accounting for over half of all assaults nationwide, and that women are

still being killed regularly by current or former partners.

In NSW, police receive a DV-related call every three minutes.

These figures are used to frame the

campaign's central argument: that despite billions of dollars in government spending, the system is failing victim-survivors because it is fragmented, inconsistent, and largely outsourced to non-government organisations.

The PSA CPSU NSW contends that the prevailing model, where services are delivered by a patchwork of community organisations funded through short-term grants, creates inequity and instability.

According to the campaign, access to support often depends on geography, leading to what Mr Little described as a "postcode lottery". Some victim-survivors receive comprehensive, long-term assistance, while others encounter waiting lists or receive only minimal support. Where a person lives will determine what non-government organisation will help them.

The union argues that outsourcing safety-critical services dilutes accountability, encapsulated in its slogan: "When safety is outsourced, accountability is outsourced."

**OUTSOURCING SAFETY-
CRITICAL SERVICES
DILUTES ACCOUNTABILITY**

The campaign was launched at the end of the union's second one-day summit on DV, which included presentations from victim-survivors Bindii Fletcher and Danielle Sharpe and Nepean and Blue Mountains Family Violence Service employees Dilsat Seyis and Julie Grigoriadis.

The PSA CPSU NSW campaign proposes a structural overhaul centred on embedding DV services within the public sector.

One of its primary demands is the creation of a dedicated, government-run domestic violence service that would operate alongside existing core services such as policing, housing, health, and child protection.

"Everyone should have access to their own Mount Druitt-style government service," said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess.

The campaign outlines five key reforms, including building public-sector DV





services, guaranteeing long-term funding, integrating systems across agencies, strengthening oversight, and developing a skilled workforce.

“These reforms are intended to produce a coordinated system in which victim-survivors can access consistent, end-to-end support without repeatedly navigating disconnected services,” said Ms Jess.

A major policy focus is the expansion of integrated, government-led service models already operating in parts of NSW. The PSA points to the Mount Druitt service as a “gold standard”, as it can provide long-term, continuous support to clients, sometimes over several years, rather than NGOs, which come and go.

The campaign proposes replicating this model across at least 12 additional regions, arguing that publicly run services offer stability and continuity that short-term NGO contracts cannot match. This approach is also linked to broader goals of workforce development, including creating secure, well-trained public sector roles in the DV field.

Another distinctive element of the campaign is its emphasis on perpetrator intervention. The PSA CPSU NSW argues that the current system inadequately addresses offender behaviour, noting that many individuals arrested for domestic violence spend extended periods in custody without receiving rehabilitation programs.

“Inmates on remand for DV offences are not compelled to undertake programs,” said Ms Jess, herself a Senior Corrections Officer. “Instead they spend months on remand, often stewing and plotting revenge on the partner.”

By integrating Corrective Services NSW into the broader DFV response, the campaign seeks to reduce recidivism and prevent further harm after offenders are released.

The PSA CPSU NSW campaign also draws on specific incidents to illustrate systemic failures, particularly with outsourcing of government services. For example, the union referenced the killing of Molly Ticehurst in the state’s central west, highlighting delays in the installation of safety measures by a private provider as evidence of the risks associated with outsourced services.

Despite opposition from some NGOs, the PSA campaign has succeeded in elevating public discussion about the structure of DV services in NSW. By framing domestic violence as a systemic public safety issue rather than solely a social service concern, the campaign challenges policymakers to reconsider long-standing assumptions about service delivery. It also aligns with broader debates about the role of government versus non-government providers in essential services, particularly in areas where failure can have life-or-death consequences.

“The PSA’s DV campaign represents a bold and controversial attempt to transform the sector,” said Mr Little. “We are convincing the people of our state that DV services should be publicly delivered, integrated, and accountable.”

“The campaign has played a critical role in reshaping policy conversations and highlighting the urgent need for effective, coordinated responses to domestic violence in NSW.”



PSA CPSU NSW TRAINS STAFF AND DELEGATES ON EQUITY

Courses provided to better service members.

PSA CPSU NSW staff and delegates have undertaken gender equity training. The courses, devised by Unions NSW, were delivered as one-day workshops. New employees in the future will also receive training. They will then be rolled out to Delegates.

“We want the workplaces we represent to be free of harassment and sexual violence,” said PSA CPSU NSW Women’s Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. “This course helps all staff better understand the important of gender equity in all workplaces.”

“According to Unions NSW, one in three people throughout Australia experience sexual harassment at work, yet only 18 per cent of workplace sexual harassment incidents are reported.”

The courses included information on gender equality and social structures, preventing violence and how casual sexism reinforces discrimination.



UNIONS NSW LAUNCHES ASSAULT CAMPAIGN



Unions NSW is supporting a campaign to end the right for defendants to access sexual assault counselling notes.

The campaign was established by investigative journalist Nina Funnell, Marque Lawyers, RASARA (Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy) and several people whose counselling notes were subpoenaed which caused them considerable harm.

If a complaint goes to court, defence lawyers may issue a subpoena for their counselling files.

Once they have the files, which include written files, voice and video recordings

of counselling sessions, they often use the content to humiliate, retraumatise and re-victimise the complainant by replaying counselling calls during cross examination. In some cases, these private notes have been leaked to the media without the complainant’s knowledge.

In NSW there is confusion as to whether these subpoenas can be challenged and if they are there is a cost burden on the counselling service or client.

This means many services do not challenge the subpoenas and for many complainants the first they know the defence and the defendant have their files is when they attend the court case.

ACTU CALLS FOR REPRODUCTIVE LEAVE FOR ALL



Nationwide campaign reflects PSA CPSU NSW demands

The PSA CPSU NSW has supported a call by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to introduce 10 days of paid reproductive health leave for all workers.

“Some of our members covered by Fair Work, such as Aware Super and some universities, already have these provisions,” said PSA CPSU NSW Women’s Industrial Officer. “However, we are pushing to get these entitlements into Awards covered by the Industrial Relations Commission, too.”

Some workers have secured paid reproductive health leave through union-negotiated collective agreements, but

most Australians have no dedicated right to take time off for their reproductive health needs. As a result, workers either use personal leave or go unpaid to manage routine and serious health issues.

The Queensland Government already provides 10 days of paid reproductive health leave to its public workforce, but no national standard exists.

The ACTU submitted a proposal to the federal parliamentary inquiry into the National Employment Standards (NES), calling for a dedicated entitlement to reproductive health leave.

The NES guarantees personal and carer’s leave, but does not cover reproductive health, despite the widespread impact of reproductive health issues impacting workers, couples, and families.

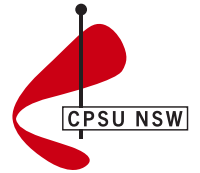
“Reproductive health affects all workers, regardless of their gender,” said ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O’Brien. “Whether you’re going through IVE, attending a prostate cancer screening, or managing endometriosis, these are important health issues that should never cause financial stress.

“Early intervention saves lives. Right now, Australians are delaying screenings, pushing through pain, and working while unwell because they can’t afford to run down their leave balance. This only creates more serious health problems down the track and keeps people away from work for longer.

“The evidence is clear: giving people paid time off to manage their health improves long-term well-being and lifts productivity.”



OSARA
HEAL+H



CAREGIVERS:

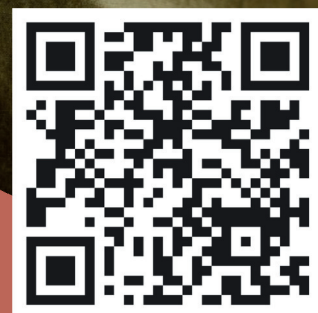
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RICH KID, POOR KID

The battle for public education

Jane Caro
\$19.95
The Australia Institute Press



Author Jane Caro was born in Britain. When she was a child, her parents decided to move to Australia on the condition that the country had a good public education system.

Ms Caro's book, *Rich Kid, Poor Kid* paints a picture of a system that has lost its lustre since it lured the Caros from the other side of the world.

Ms Caro argues that Australia's education system, often perceived as egalitarian, in fact reproduces and reinforces inequality, with wealth and

social background playing a decisive role in determining a child's educational opportunities and subsequent life chances.

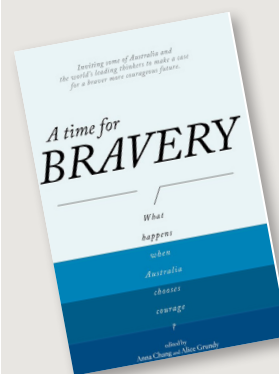
Meanwhile, children from poorer backgrounds are left navigating under-resourced schools and fewer opportunities. And to make it worse, their parents' taxes are propping up the wealthier schools they have no chance of entering.

Ms Caro uses extensive data with accessible, but avoids academic jargon, making complex social and economic issues understandable to a broad audience. Her background in media and communications is evident in her clear, persuasive style and her knack for framing arguments in a way that resonates emotionally as well as intellectually. This readability makes the book particularly effective as a tool for raising public awareness.

The author is especially critical of government funding policies that disproportionately benefit private schools, many of which already serve more affluent communities. She argues that such policies exacerbate inequality rather than alleviating it, effectively subsidising privilege while leaving public schools underfunded. Her critique is not merely theoretical; she points to concrete policy decisions and their real-world consequences, urging readers to reconsider the fairness of the current system.



A TIME FOR BRAVERY



What happens with Australia chooses courage?

Edited by Anna Chang and Alice Grundy
\$19.95

The Australia Institute Press

Some of Australia's best thinkers, including PSA CPSU NSW Country Conference guest Richard Denniss (pictured), offer idea of how to make the country better.

While the ideas offered are diverse, a major theme runs through the chapters: governments that take risks, particularly risks that challenge powerful stakeholders, can shape our country for the better.

Topics chosen range from refugee rights to the need for green bans to return to political discourse.

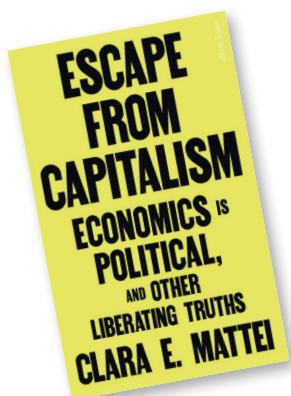
The book is an easy, inspiring read, with short chapters ideal to dip in and out of.



ESCAPE FROM CAPITALISM

Economics is Political, and Other Liberating Truths

Clara E. Mattei
\$55.00
Allen Lane



Italian academic Clara E. Mattei points out that capitalism has been the guiding social system for a minuscule slice of human history, yet its role in organising our lives seems to be beyond questioning.

Professor Mattei, who lectures in the United States, urges readers to question more rigorously a system that increasingly leaves people in a form of economic servitude to the winners in the increased economic disparity taking grip on the world.

The book covers the austerity measures that were implemented in much of the industrialised world in the early 2000s, and the damage they wrought on working people. Professor Mattei also talks about measures of austerity imposed on developing economies that are already

struggling to create economic systems that generate higher living standards for their populations.

The book covers the Israel-Palestine divide, claiming it mirrors the gap elsewhere on the planet between rich and poor countries.

Other issues addressed include the requirement to have a pool of unemployed people in the system to suppress wage growth and the anti-democratic nature of central banks doing all they can to keep inflation low, regardless of the effects on the rest of the economy.

Rather than just shaking her fist at an unjust world, Professor Mattei looks at smaller-scale economic models in countries such as Brazil that have bucked the trend and looked beyond capitalism to provide people with a more equal social system.

SIRENS

Inside the shadow world of first responders

Martin McKenzie-Murray
\$34.99
Black Inc



At what cost do the services of first responders, so vital for our society, come to those who deliver them? Martin McKenzie-Murray, himself a sufferer of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), interviews three Australian frontline workers and delves into the mental effects of dealing with traumatic sights, such as a



mother and baby both decapitated after a car accident.

Peter, a Paramedic in Tasmania, served at high-profile disasters including the Port Arthur massacre and the Beaconsfield mine collapse.

Tara, a Firefighter, enjoys the camaraderie in the brigade, but also confronts reminders of her past.

After a difficult upbringing, Brett found stability in being a Police Officer, but it eventually forced him to question his rigid moral view of the world.

PSA CPSU NSW members, such as

Prison Officers, Youth Justice Workers and those in emergency-based organisations such as NSW Police and the Rural Fire Service will see many similarities between the three workers interviewed and their own confronting workplaces.

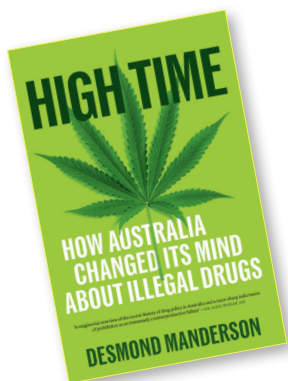
The stories cover effects such as relationship breakdowns, difficulty relating to people outside their workplaces and visits to mental-health facilities.

Sirens makes for confronting reading, but gives an excellent insight into the people protecting our society.

HIGH TIME

How Australia Changed Its Mind About Illegal Drugs

Desmond Manderson
\$36.99
La Trobe University Press



The state's drug trade, and the sentencing and incarceration of users and dealers, affects the work of thousands of PSA CPSU NSW members.

Professor in the College of Law Governance and Policy at the Australian National University, Desmond Manderson, looks at why drugs were made illegal and the recent relaxation of laws relating to possession.

In the book's second sentence, Professor Manderson describes laws on drug use as "unusually repressive", and it is obvious throughout that he wants drugs addressed

as a health issue, rather than a justice issue.

High Time discusses the beginnings of drug prohibition, comparing the approach to the hands-off policing of alcohol.

The book discusses the success of harm-minimisation strategies during the outbreak of AIDS, when Australia was spared much of the spread of the disease via needles.

Opponents to Professor Manderson's laissez faire approach to drug use may find his treatment of overdoses slightly offhand, but the book is well researched and will be an interesting read to anyone involved in the effects of drug use in NSW.

PODCAST OF THOUSANDS

The PSA CPSU NSW is a broad church, with more than 40,000 members spread across a bewildering array of workplaces.

The union's regular podcasts give listeners an insight into the working worlds of union members with vital, and often extraordinary, jobs.

Iain Watt (pictured right) works in the Coroner's Court of NSW. He was recently interviewed by Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright (pictured at left) for a podcast released in April.

"Iain gave us an insight into a world many of us only know through crime dramas," said Mr Wright. "He discussed issues such as vicarious trauma, understaffing and just what happens when an autopsy is required."

Crime drama fans would also enjoy the interview with Forensics Officer James Shonk, who gave an insight into the investigative work done by PSA members at NSW Police.

Sheriff's Officer Glenn Elliott-Rudder appears on another episode, discussing the



work done by these members in keeping the state's court system operating and safe, and the threats they face from groups such as terrorists and 'sovereign citizens'.

Away from crime-fighting and courts, the podcast interviewed Homes NSW Delegate Mary-ann McPherson and Organiser Rachel Eldred about the important role the agency plays in addressing the housing crisis.

In another episode, Senior Communications Officer Jason Mountney discussed a recent issue of *Red Tape*.

"We know our members do interesting and important work for the people of NSW," said Mr Wright. "By producing regular podcasts, we can make sure everyone else gets an insight, too."

Episodes are available wherever listeners access their podcasts.



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AWAYE

With First Nations issues under attack from the rise of the hard right, a welcome podcast tells a variety of stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People nationwide.

Produced by the ABC, *Awaye* is presented by Rudi Bremer, sister of PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council member Sean Bremer. The podcasts cover a huge variety of subjects, giving in-depth analysis of the serious, such as the loss of Aboriginal language, to the entertaining, such as an interview with Yolngu rapper Baker Boy.

The yarns are backed up by excellent production values and Ms Bremer's delivery is polished, including an episode on language where she effortlessly shifts between English and Aboriginal tongues.

It would be unfair to pigeonhole *Awaye* as simply a podcast for First Nations issues. The stories Ms Bremer



tells and the people she interviews would be of interest to most listeners. With subjects as diverse as organ

donation and getting younger voices into politics, there is something in these episodes for everyone.

THE NPR POLITICS PODCAST

National Public Radio (NPR) is an American public broadcasting organisation based in the country's capital. Funded by subscriptions, low-key sponsorship and government grants, it operates in a less-commercial manner than most American news organisations

NPR is celebrated for its down-to-earth, comprehensive coverage of issues. The podcasts continue in this vein, calling on a variety of sources in each episode.

Issues range from the US electoral system and the progress of the war in Iran.

Fans of the podcast, and there should be many, need to make time every day, as the NPR Politics Podcast produces its episodes daily. Episodes range from 20 to 30 minutes each.

With the people of Australia affected so strongly by American politics, this is a valuable podcast to listen to.



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RETIREES HEAR ABOUT LICENSING RULES

Seniors learn about Service NSW rules.

Judy Tieu of Service NSW attended a recent meeting of the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates. “Ms Tieu took us through the rules regarding senior drivers, as well as other services available to older people in our state,” said Chair of the Retired Associates, Dave McKeough.

Ms Tieu outlined the processes of taking a test to keep a licence.

“She recommended taking a lesson or two to iron out any bad habits,” said Mr McKeough. “Your grandkids will be the most up to date with road rules and are

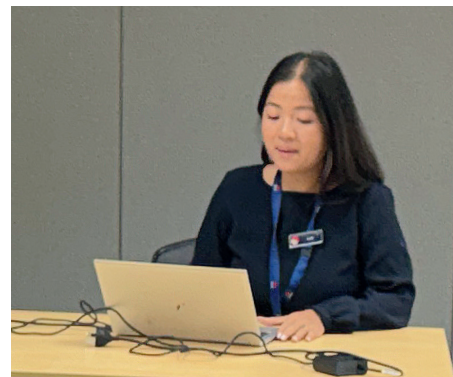
a good source of information before you take a test.”

The group was told if a senior driver fails a test, they get two more attempts “unless it was very dangerous driving”.

“You can apply for a modified licence if you fail three times,” said Mr McKeough.

Ms Tieu also took participants through the Service NSW Savings Finder package, which outlines how seniors can cut their bills.

“Presentations such as these are a reason members leaving the workforce should remain members of the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates,” said Mr McKeough. “Our regular meetings are not only a great way to keep in contact



with old friends, they can feature excellent presentations like Ms Tieu’s.

“Once a proud unionist, always a proud unionist.”

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare life expectancy at birth has increased, from 75.0 years for males and 80.9 years for females in 1993, to 81.1 years for males and 85.1 years for females as of 2023. The Australian Bureau of Statistics says that Australia’s population has grown older, with the median age increasing from 33.4 years at 30 June 1994 to 38.3 years at 30 June 2024.

The percentage of the population aged 65 and over has increased from 12 per cent to 17 per cent over the same period. Retirees represent 17 per cent of the population, the highest it has ever been since Australia began the metric of demographics.

Thanks to advancements in health care, people are working much longer than they ever have. However, we are also in a relatively ageist work environment. Technology in the workplace travels at breakneck speeds. And greying hair is seen as a sign of not being able to keep up. Those of us with abundant real-world experience can need industrial help in the workplace more than ever. Being part of a union when you are over 50 in the workplace is smart. There are no two ways



to look at it. The PSA CPSU NSW has 227 members who are 75 and over and still employed.

“We are there for anyone facing discrimination due to their age,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “This is as unacceptable as being singled out due to ethnicity or gender.”

The PSA CPSU NSW also has 283 members of the Retired Associates who are 75 and over.

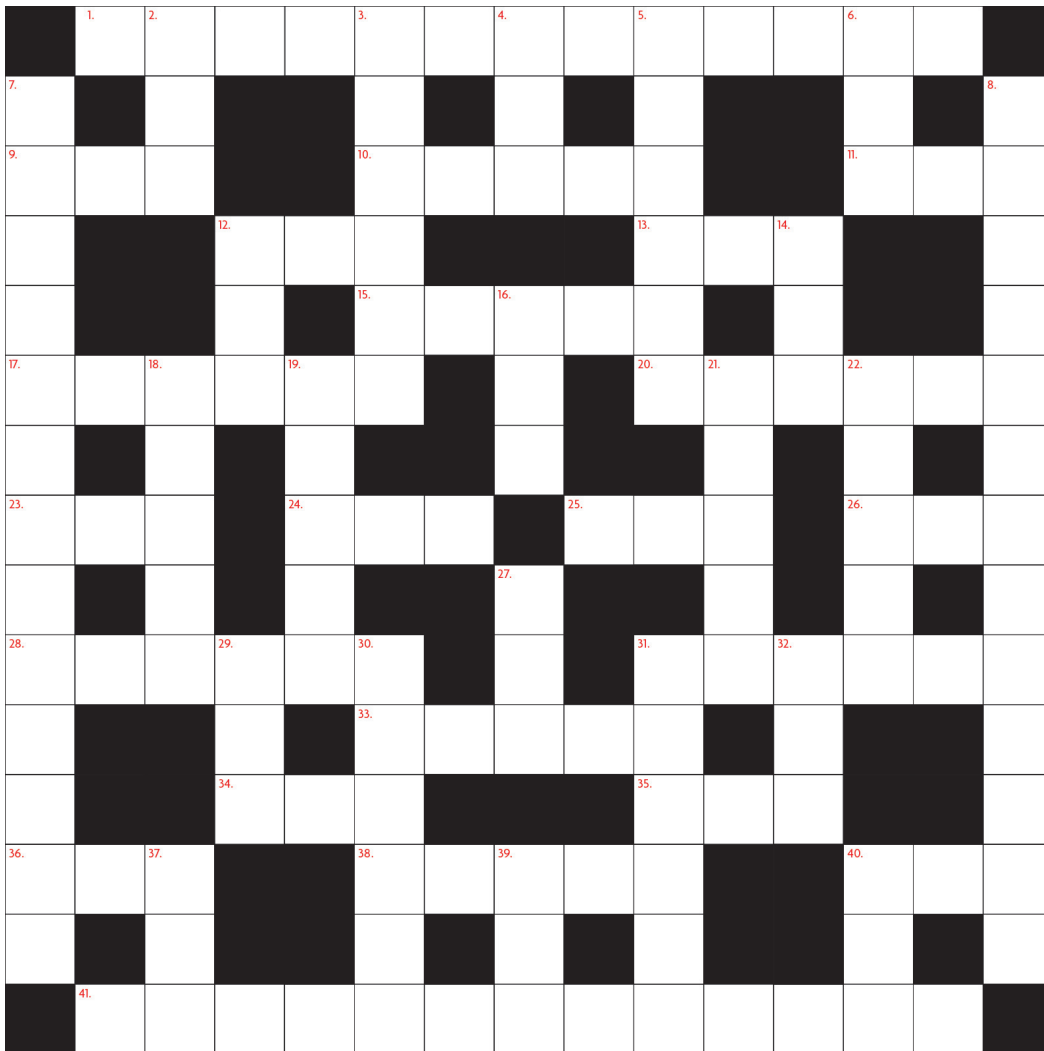
“Being part of your union after you retire is smart”. Nicole Jess, PSA CPSU NSW President said. “Talking to

our Retired Associates, I realise that retirees have a lifetime of knowledge concerning workplace issues, so being part of the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates is something we should all consider as we get closer to turning off the alarm in the morning.

“The Retired Associates meet regularly at PSA House and online to discuss issues that affect older Australians. We love that members keep their membership going.

“Your boss isn’t likely to look after you after you retire, but if you are a member of the PSA, we certainly will.”

CROSSWORD

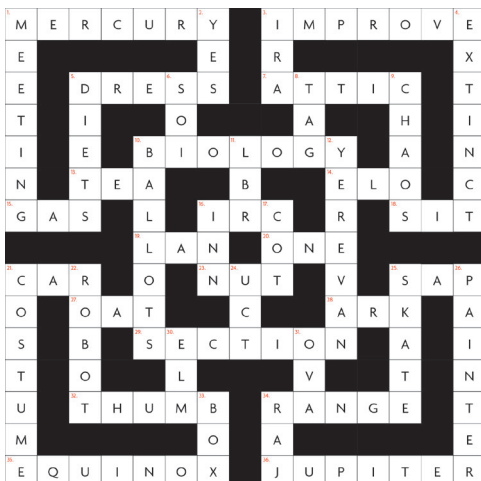


- 25. Tawny frogmouth is an example of this (3)
- 26. Slide down a snowy slope (3)
- 28. Not unusual (6)
- 31. Demand for wicket by cricketers (6)
- 33. Cooking apparatuses (5)
- 34. Angelic Mr Neeson (3)
- 35. Mr Meninga (3)
- 36. Can be preceded with pea-, hazel- or coco- (3)
- 38. Sporting field (5)
- 40. Gesture that means no in Bulgaria (3)
- 41. American-Armenian hard rock band (6,2,1,4)

DOWN

- 2. Internet address (1,1,1)
- 3. positive about something (2,4)
- 4. Place for very sick people (1,1,1)
- 5. Federal Government agency that collates and analyses statistical data (1,1,1)
- 6. Brutish foot soldier in Lord of the Rings (3)
- 7. Jam song, That's _____ (13)
- 8. Overseas British territory associated with Angus Taylor (6,7)
- 12. New Zealand bird that can fly (3)
- 14. Result of time in the sun (3)
- 16. First name of singing Ulsterman Mr Morrison (3)
- 18. Tradesperson you call in to finish off the shower renovation (5)
- 19. Indian side dish and condiment (5)
- 21. Maximum, fully loaded weight of an aircraft (3,2)
- 22. Theatre passageway (5)
- 27. Observe (3)
- 29. One of the combatants in Quadrophenia (3)
- 30. Find (6)
- 31. Eritrean capital (6)
- 32. Friend (3)
- 37. Attempt (3)
- 39. Jeff Lynne's band (1,1,1)
- 40. At present (3)

Last issue's solution



ACROSS

- 1. Formal accreditation (13)
- 9. Non score (3)
- 10. Liquid starters (5)
- 11. American spy agency (1,1,1)
- 12. Union for truck drivers and food delivery workers (1,1,1)
- 13. Not in (3)
- 15. Waterway (5)
- 17. Cease work (6)
- 21. Skin of this fruit supposedly responsible for multiple slip ups (6)
- 23. Trouble or afflict in mind or body (3)
- 24. American ant-immigrant goon squad (1,1,1)

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